

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/475,991
Response dated July 19, 2004
Reply to OA of May 14, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 34 and 38 have amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicant regards as his invention. The applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated **May 14, 2004**.

Examiner Interview

The applicant's representative wishes to thank the Examiner for the opportunity to talk to him in the Examiner interview that took place on Thursday, July 15, 2004. As discussed in that interview claim 34 has been amended here in the same manner as proposed. The Examiner indicated in the interview that the proposed amendment to claim 34 would make that claim allowable. Therefore, allowance of claim 34 is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claim 38 is objected to because of a minor informality. Taking the Examiner's comments into consideration, claim 38 has been amended. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection of claim 38 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102

Claim 34 is rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakabayashi (U.S.

Patent 5,675,672).

The present invention is a document processing device in which a large document may be partitioned into a number of regions which are scanned in separately. An overlapping detecting unit detects overlapping sections of the document images by comparing positions and sizes of character regions in the document images.

Nakabayashi describes a two-dimensional linker that is able to take a document (32) that is partitioned and scanned by a first scan (28) and a second scan (30). An optical character reader (12) is able to recognize the ASCII characters in the two documents and saves each into a first memory (14) and a second memory (16). An aligner (20) identifies the duplicate characters in each document and eliminates the duplicates from one of the documents. A linking means then takes the two documents and forms a single documents stored in a third memory (26). As illustrated in figure 4, the aligner (20) searches for duplicated phrases. In addition, as illustrated in figure 5, the aligner (20) may search for duplicated columns of characters.

Claim 34 has been amended in the same manner as claim 32. Therefore, claim 34 is allowable for the same reasons as that for claim 32. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 34 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakabayashi (U.S. Patent 5,675,672) is respectfully requested.

Claim 34 is rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by either one of the following two references: Japanese Published Patent Application 11-196255 to Matsuda or

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Japanese Published Patent Application 11-66234 to Miyamoto et al.

Matsuda describes an image processing method in which character codes and their positions are detected at the borders of images. Based upon these characters detected and their positions, the overlap between images is determined. The images are then merged based upon the overlap detected.

Miyamoto describes a method for merging images based upon circumscribing a rectangle around an overlapping character pattern. The overlapping images are then merged.

Claim 34 has been amended in the same manner as claim 32. Therefore, claim 34 is allowable for the same reasons as that for claim 32. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 34 under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by either one of the following two references: Japanese Published Patent Application 11-196255 to Matsuda or Japanese Published Patent Application 11-66234 to Miyamoto et al. is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

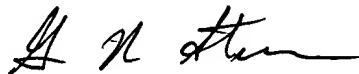
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 34 and 38, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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